

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR INCREASED INDEPENDENCE

A SIMPLE GUIDE



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INTRODUCTION

Country Therapy – About Us:

We are a small team of occupational therapists with experience in working with children, adolescents, and adults. We work with our clients and their families or carers to achieve their best occupational therapy outcomes.

We provide mobile and location-based services to cater to the needs of participants who can travel and ones who would like us to visit them at their home.



For more information about us, [click here](#)

Purpose of this booklet:

The purpose of this booklet is to have a practical, easy-to-read booklet, summarising commonly recommended and best available assistive technology options for adults with disabilities.

This resource will describe a range of commonly recommended assistive technology solutions that are prescribed by occupational therapists to enhance participation in everyday tasks such as mobility, transfers, self-care, and daily living. This booklet also highlights the benefits of general technology which can serve in assistive functions.

How to use this booklet:

Please refer to the table of contents to identify what area of assistive technology you are wanting to find more information on, to support participants in a range of different occupations.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

OVERVIEW

What is Assistive Technology (AT)?

Assistive technology is defined as “equipment or devices that help you do the things that you can’t do because of your disability” (NDIA, 2025). Assistive technology has the power to be life changing for participants who have difficulty completing a range of daily activities. Whilst basic AT can be very beneficial, specialised and well trialled equipment can be life altering by improving independence for adults with disabilities (Srinivasan et al., 2025).



What does reasonable and necessary AT mean?

As outlined by the NDIA (2025), reasonable and necessary means that the AT:

- must be related to a participant’s disability
- must not include day-to-day living costs not related to your disability support needs, such as groceries
- should represent value for money
- must be likely to be effective and work for the participant, and
- should take into account support given to you by other government services, your family, carers, networks and the community.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY CATEGORIES

COST

Low cost

- Under \$1,500 per item.
- Items are generally easy to set up and use.
- Available from local suppliers or general non-disability specific retailers.
- come out of the Core – Consumables section of the budget.

Mid cost

- Between \$1,500 and \$15,000 per item.
- Items may be more difficult to choose and set up by the individual.
- Funding comes out of the Capital budget.

High cost

- Over \$15,000 per item.
- Items are complex and need individual assessments.
- Need specialised knowledge or tools to be set up.
- can be custom made to the individuals needs.
- Items come out of the Capital budget.

RISK

Low risk

- Products that need very little advice or setup support from assistive technology advisors to use them safely.
- Low risk of causing harm when used in daily life environments.

High risk

- Products will generally need advice from an assistive technology advisor or assistive technology assessor for the right item selection and good outcomes.
- Items regulated by the Therapeutic Goods Administration in Australia are considered higher risk.

ROLE OF SUPPORT COORDINATORS IN AT



Whilst Support Coordinators (SCs) cannot prescribe or clinically assess what AT a participant needs, they play a major role in the process. The role of a Support Coordinator in AT prescription involves:

Identifying AT needs within a plan: SCs work with the participant and family to clarify their goals and whether AT might benefit their goals. They can also help by checking if the AT is already funded in their NDIS plan or if an assessment is required.

Linking participants with the right professionals: SCs can connect participants to allied health providers who can assess, trial, and prescribe the AT.

Supporting evidence gathering: SCs coordinate reports, quotes, and documentation required for the AT application. They also ensure everything aligns with NDIS requirements.

Assisting with processes: SCs help submit requests for AT to the NDIS (via myplace portal, email, or during plan reassessment). They may also assist with explaining the difference between low-cost AT (often bought directly with funding) and complex AT (which requires professional reports).

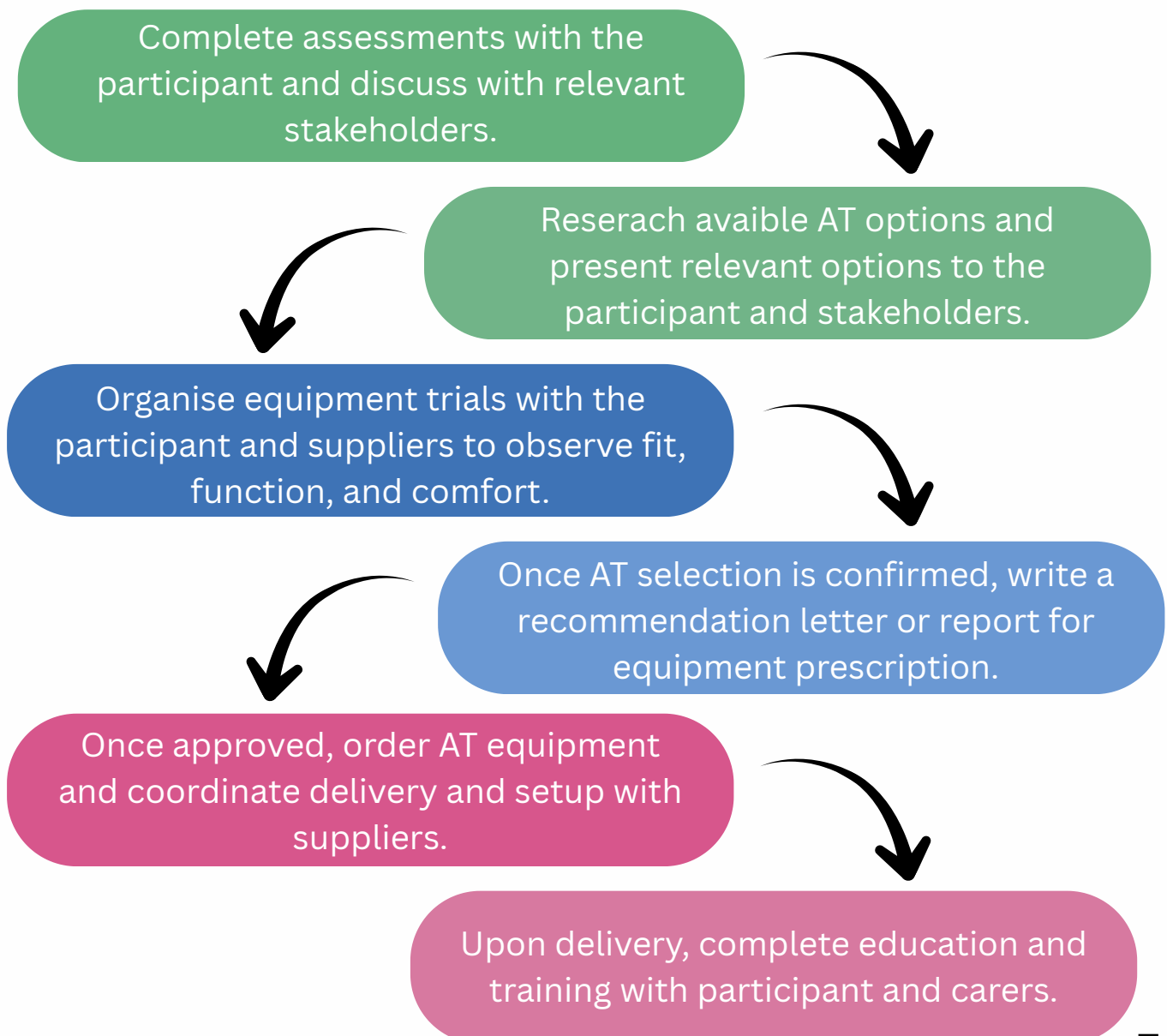
Implementation & follow-up: SCs support the participant to understand how to purchase approved AT. Alongside the Allied Health professional, they will also check in to ensure the equipment or technology is actually meeting their needs.

ROLE OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS IN AT

What is an Occupational Therapist?

An occupational therapist works with individuals to help them complete their everyday tasks such as getting around, bathing, and cooking. The aim of occupational therapy is to support adults to live more independently and safely. Part of the role includes the prescription of assistive technology as part of their NDIS funding.

Overview of the process for an OT in prescribing AT:



ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

When working with participants in rural locations, it is important to consider their environment before planning or deciding what assistive technology may be useful.

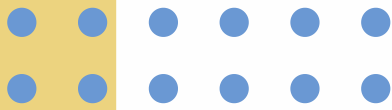
Many people living in rural communities work in trades and agricultural jobs, often resulting in them spending a lot of time outside in different terrains. Many people living rurally also live on large properties and spend a large amount of their leisure time outside.

Here are some **considerations** to think about when recommending AT to someone living or working in rural locations:

- Is the AT suitable for different terrains?
- Is the AT going to need much follow-up or repairs (many rural participants may lack access to follow-up or repair services)?
- Is the AT weather resistant and going to withstand rain and other harsh conditions (if being used or stored outside)?
- If technological, does the device need to be made available for offline use (in areas with no service)?
- Digital literacy of participant and family.



Farmer Scott Collier, unable to walk but still able to farm due to a stand up tracked wheelchair



TYPES OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY



MOBILITY

Description:

Mobility aids are any pieces of assistive technology that help individuals to move within and around their environment. Mobility aids are essential in improving functional independence as well as wellbeing and confidence.

Common Conditions Supported:

A range of conditions can result in decreased mobility, such as spinal cord injury, leg amputation, general decline, arthritis, cerebral palsy, stroke and multiple sclerosis.

Examples of AT in this category:



Walking stick

Description: provides support while walking and helps users to distribute their weight.

Product detail: can be purchased as a single- or four-point base.

Assessment: recommendation letter

Cost: low

Risk: low

Description: provides balance while walking and can be used for seated rest breaks.

Product detail: will include handbrakes, baskets or trays, lightweight and foldable frame.

Assessment: functional assessment and report

Cost: low

Risk: medium



Wheeled walker



MOBILITY continued



Manual wheelchair

Description: allows the individual to mobilise while seated if they have difficulty walking.

Product detail: will include brakes, lightweight and foldable frame, footrests and armrests

Can be self-propelled or attendant-propelled.

Assessment: functional assessment and report

Cost: mid

Risk: medium



Mobility scooter

Description: a powered mobility device that allows individuals who have difficulty walking to access the community.

Product detail: will include handlebar style controls, battery and charger, armrests, head and tail lights, horn, key ignition, and basket.

Customisation: suspension system, all-terrain wheels, canopy/rain cover, rearview mirrors and high-range batteries.

Assessment: assistive technology assessment and report.

Cost: high

Risk: high



Powered wheelchair

Description: allows for mobilisation while seated if the individual has difficulty walking and limited arm/hand strength.

Product detail: will include brakes, footrests and armrests, joystick controller, anti-tip wheels, and seatbelt.

Customisation: all-terrain wheels, suspension system, tilt and recline, assistive hand controls, and attendant control.

Assessment: assistive technology assessment and report.

Cost: high

Risk: high

TRANSFER EQUIPMENT

Description:

Transfer equipment includes a wide range of devices designed to assist individuals with disability to transferring safely and at times independently. Transfer equipment also assists in safer manual handling for carers.

Common Conditions Supported:

A range of adults with disabilities would benefit from transfer equipment. Those with conditions that result in reduced mobility whilst safely transferring would benefit from the use of these devices.

Examples of AT in this category:



Slide sheet

Description: used for the smooth and simple movement of patients from one bed to another, or from the bottom of the bed to the top of the bed.

Product detail: product will come as a large sheet, in different colours.

Assessment: recommendation letter

Cost: low

Risk: medium



Transfer Board

Description: facilitates safe transfer from one surface to another.

Product detail: product will include a solid board in varying colours and materials.

Assessment: recommendation letter

Cost: low

Risk: medium-high

TRANSFER EQUIPMENT

continued



Handy Bar

Description: a lightweight, portable handle that acts as an additional contact point when transferring in and out of a car.

Product detail: attaches to the striker plate on the inside of the car door. Will include attachment point and gripped handle.

Assessment: recommendation letter

Cost: low

Risk: low



Sara Stedy

Description: The Sara Stedy is a mobile transfer aid designed to assist individuals with reduced mobility in moving from one seated position to another.

Product detail: comes with pivoting opening seat, crossbar handle, knee support and pedal operated chassis legs.

Assessment: functional assessment and report

Cost: mid

Risk: high



Hoist

Description: a device used to lift a person from one surface to another (e.g. bed to chair).

Product detail: comes in a range of types, refer to website for specific product details.

Assessment: functional assessment and report

Cost: mid-high

Risk: high

SELF - CARE

BATHING, TOILETING + DRESSING

Definition:

Assistive technologies used to help individuals participate in their self-care activities including bathing, toileting and dressing. These technologies allows individuals to maintain independence, health and dignity.

Common Conditions Supported:

There are many different conditions that can contribute to an individuals' need for this kind of assistive technology, including spinal cord injury, leg amputation, general decline, arthritis, cerebral palsy, stroke, multiple sclerosis.

Examples of AT in this category:



Description: allows individuals to attend to their showering and toileting needs without needing to stand or transfer.

Product detail: will include a water-proof frame, padded seat with cutout, lockable wheels and height-adjustable legs..

Customisation: self-propelling or attendant-propelling.

Assessment: assistive technology assessment and report.

Cost: high

Risk: high

Shower commode

Description: allows individuals to attend to their hygiene needs while reducing the risk of slips and falls while showering.

Product detail: will include a lightweight frame, plastic seat and backrest, drainage holes, height-adjustable legs and non-slip rubber feet.

Assessment: recommendation letter

Cost: low

Risk: low

Shower chair





SELF-CARE continued



Description: provides lightweight, handheld devices that help the individual to grasp, lift, or retrieve items. Examples: leg lifter, sock donner, dressing stick, reacher and sponge.

Product detail: will include a long handle with the adaptive end.

Assessment: recommendation letter

Cost: low

Risk: low

Long-handled aids

Description: provides physical support during everyday tasks and reduces the risk of slips and falls.

Product detail: according to Australian Standards a fixed grab rail should be fixed into the studs of the wall in order to withstand a weight of 112kg. The sizing should be 30–40mm in diameter, and standard lengths of 300mm, 450mm, 600mm, or 900mm. Grab rails can be fixed in different positions and come in different finishes for safety reasons. The use of temporary grab rails is typically NOT recommended

Note: although considered as an AT solution, the installation of grab rails can be considered a home modification and will typically require a higher level of reporting.

Assessment: home modification assessment and report

Cost: low-mid (typically out of the Capital Funding)

Risk: medium



Grab rails



Description: allows the individual to transfer on and off the toilet with more ease.

Product detail: will include a raised toilet seat, armrests, adjustable-height legs, anti-slip feet, and a removable pan.

Assessment: recommendation letter

Cost: low

Risk: low

Over-toilet frame

DAILY LIVING

KITCHEN + MEAL PREP

Description:

Kitchen aids for adults with disabilities includes a variety of devices and tools, such as modified versions of common equipment. These aids are intended to assist with independence in cooking and daily kitchen tasks.

Common Conditions supported:

Kitchen AT is beneficial for people with limited physical mobility and endurance. It is also useful for those with finger and hand impairments such as reduced strength and dexterity.

Examples of AT in this category:



Perching stool

Description: allows you to take seated breaks or stand in a semi-seated position whilst cooking.

Product detail: includes angled seat, backrest, arm rests and height adjustable legs.

Assessment: recommendation letter

Cost: low

Risk: low



Adaptive cutting board/station

Description: allows individuals the opportunity to cut their food simply and safely while only using one hand.

Product detail: product comes in a range of variations for different needs, includes features such as non-slip feet, spikes to hold down food and edges to hold food in place.

Assessment: recommendation letter

Cost: low

Risk: low



DAILY LIVING continued



One-handed can opener

Description: automatically opens cans.

Product detail: comes with a button for automatic use.

Assessment: recommendation letter

Cost: low

Risk: low



Modified cutlery

Description: assists people who have poor grip, decreased muscle control, tremors, upper limb weakness, hand pain or reduced dexterity when using standard cutlery.

Product detail: can include wide grips, angled cutlery, a range of colours and styles.

Assessment: recommendation letter

Cost: low

Risk: low



Non slip jar opener

Description: provides a soft, grippy surface to help open jar lids with less force.

Product detail: cone-shaped design fits comfortably in the hand and enhances kitchen independence for those with reduced hand strength or dexterity.

Assessment: recommendation letter

Cost: low

Risk: low



Modified dinnerware

Description: the plate guard, also known as a plate surround, attaches to a standard plate to prevent food from sliding off.

Product detail: comes in different shapes and colours to align with your dinnerware.

Assessment: recommendation letter

Cost: low

Risk: low

GENERAL TECHNOLOGY WITH ASSISTIVE FUNCTIONS

Definition:

Current technologies, such as mobile phones, smartwatches, and computers, can be adapted and used as an assistive technology just by pressing a few buttons. General technology can often have many assistive functions that make them easier to use in everyday situations. All assistive features can be found in the accessibility tab in settings for both Apple and Android products. These can be set-up without an assessment by an OT with no cost or risk to the individual.

Common Conditions Supported:

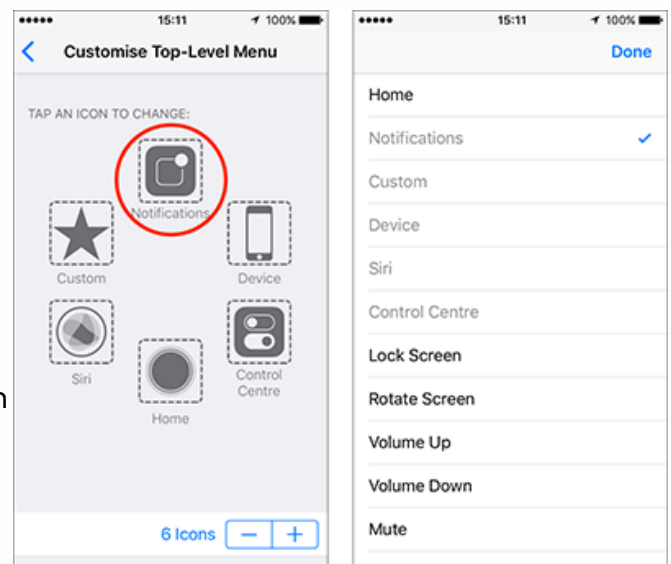
Conditions such as those with visual impairments may benefit highly from these technologies. Also users who are at high risk of falls would benefit from the falls detection features.

Examples of AT in this category:

Assistive touch

Description: An on-screen button that can be used as an easier alternative to physical buttons or complex gestures.

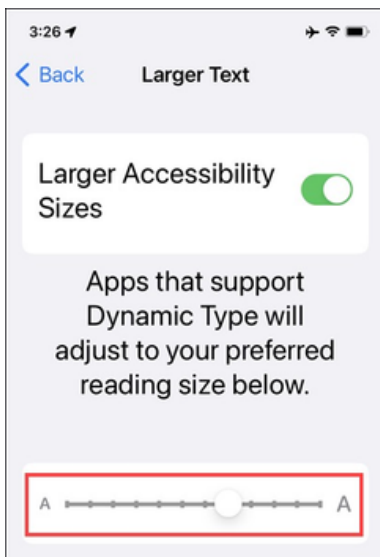
Product detail: will include customisable actions such as adjusting volume, returning to home-screen or recently opened apps, taking screenshots, and locking the screen.



Falls detection

Description: designed to detect hard falls and can automatically connect you to emergency services if needed.
Product detail: the device will detect a hard fall and will notify the wearer through an visual alert, vibration and sound. The user will then be given the choice to contact emergency services. If a fall has occurred and there is no movement or response to the notification, emergency services will automatically be called and emergency contacts notified.

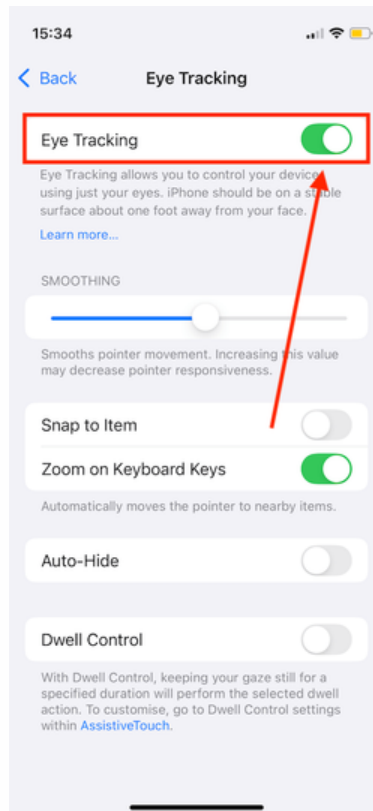
GENERAL TECHNOLOGY continued



Large font size

Description: designed to make on-screen text easier to read by enlarging the size of the font. This is an easy to use feature for those with visual impairments or low vision.

Product detail: text can be altered system-wide and be consistent across all apps or be different in different apps.

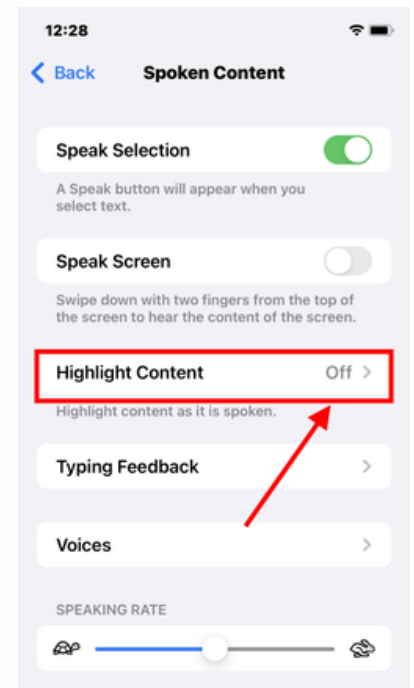


Eye tracking

Description: Enables the user to navigate and interact with their device without the use of their hands.

Product detail: Once eye-tracking is turned on, the individual is able to control an on-screen cursor with their eyes. Moving your eyes will allow you to scroll and swipe while pausing your gaze helps you select. Eye-tracking can replicate tap, swipe, scroll, and access to menus and apps.

Note: this feature is only available in Apple iPhone models later than the iPhone 12, not available on Samsung phones.



Spoken content

Description: Allows the content that is on the screen to be read aloud for those who have difficulty reading text.

Product detail: can be used when highlighting specific text, speaking letters and words while typing, and reading the entire screens content.

C O N T A C T U S

For any further questions or to simply have a chat with us, please find us at the following places:



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